Sexual harassment by railway officers

430. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that during last three years, several senior railway officers had been charged with sexual harassment;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether inquiries had been conducted by committees of lady officers senior to perpetrators or by retired judges and perpetrators had been transferred to ensure free deposition in all cases;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether committees recorded statements of witnesses and perpetrators in presence of victims allowing cross-examination and copies of findings were given to victims in all cases; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Three senior officers (Junior Administrative Grade and above), one each from Central Railway, North Western Railway and Diesel Loco Modernisation Works, were accused of sexual harassment. As the Railways are organized Zone-wise, State-wise information is not available.

(c) and (d) The inquiries were conducted by Complaints Committee constituted in pursuance of the guidelines issued by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the case of Vishaka Vs. State of Rajasthan regarding sexual harassment of working women. As per these guidelines, the Complaints Committee is headed by a woman and not less than half of its members are women. Also, the victims of sexual harassment have the option to seek transfer of the accused officer or of their own transfer.

In two out of the above three cases, the charges of sexual harassment were found to be baseless and in one case, although the Committee did not find concrete evidence against the accused officer, the complainant was transferred as per her request.

(e) and (f) The recording of the statements of witnesses, victims and

accused officer and allowing cross-examination are integral part of such inquiries. Further, the victims are informed about the outcome of the inquiry and, if requested, the copies of the findings are also provided to them.

Suitability of tracks for super-fast trains

431. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that existing tracks are not suitable for super-fast trains;

(b) if so, whether steps are being considered so that the permitted speed limit of all super-fast trains including Rajdhanies are not required to cut down speed; and

(c) if so, the details thereof keeping in mind the risk and safe travel of passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. However, the permitted speed depends on route classification, rolling stock, signaling and interlocking system, track structure etc.

(b) The sections are kept free from speed restriction unless it is required for maintenance, renewals or some urgent unforeseen circumstances to ensure safety of traffic.

(c) Regular track renewal works are planned, sanctioned and executed to replace the same on age-cum-condition basis and subject to availability of funds.

Railway Projects from Tamil Nadu

432. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of railway projects received from Tamil Nadu during each of the last 3 years;

(b) the action taken by Government thereon;